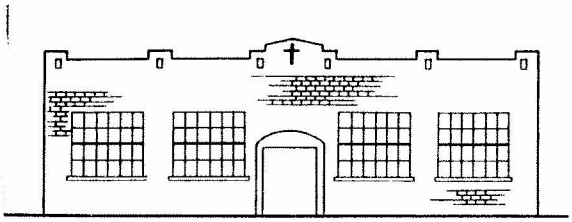
PRELIMINARY STAFF SUMMARY OF INFORMATION



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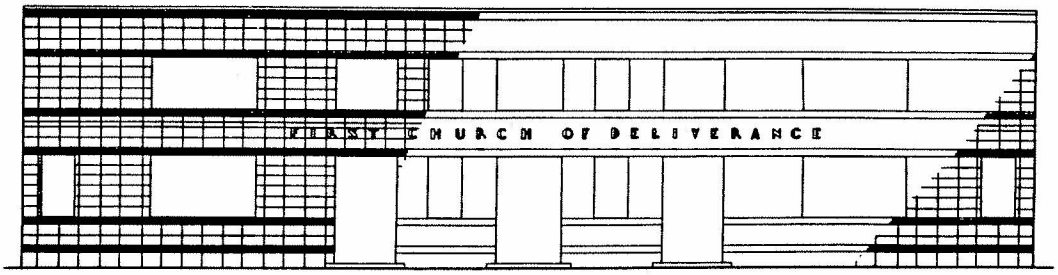

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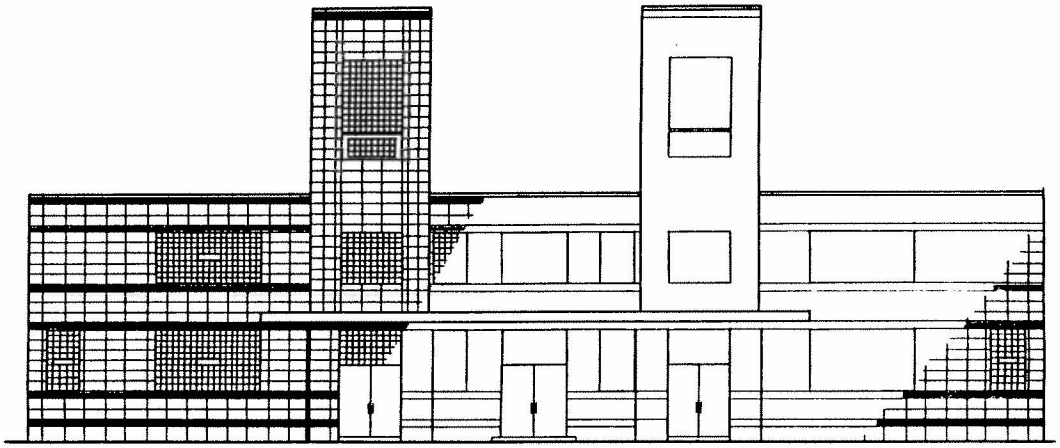


1994

First Church of Deliverance

4315 S. Wabash Avenue

Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on July 6, 1994

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Valerie B. Jarrett, Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The Commission makes its recommendation to the City Council only after careful consideration. The process begins with an extensive staff study, summarized in this report, which discusses the historical and architectural significance of the proposed landmark.

The next step--a preliminary determination by the Commission that the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration--is important because it places the review of building permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission during the remainder of the designation process.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the Commission's recommendation to the City Council should be regarded as final.

COVER: The evolution of the First Church of Deliverance building at 4315 S. Wabash Ave. (top to bottom): 1933, 1939, and 1994. The twin towers were added in 1946.

First Church of Deliverance

4315 S. Wabash Ave.

Date: 1939
Architect: Walter T. Bailey

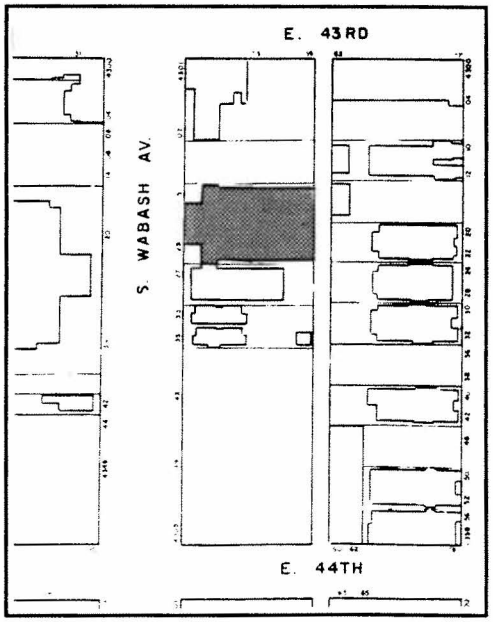
Date of alteration: 1946
Architect: Kocher, Buss and DeKlerk

In Chicago, where the number and kinds of churches are legendary, the story of First Church of Deliverance is a singular one. Any chapter of its story would document an important contribution to the city's architectural, religious, ethnic, and cultural history.

It is an African-American church, designed by an early African-American architect, Walter Bailey. It also boldly departs from the styles of architecture customarily seen in houses of worship. Bailey's use of Art Moderne for the two-story building, with its smooth surfaces and continuous lines, represents a rarely seen example of this style for ecclesiastical use.

The twin-towered church also has played an influential role in modern musical culture. Through its national radio broadcast services and its choir director, Kenneth Morris, First Church pioneered the acceptance of gospel music, then in its infancy. Among the notable musicians who have been associated with First Church are Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Dinah Washington, and Sallie Martin, the "mother of gospel music."

Finally, the success of First Church--the state's first organized Spiritual congregation--is owed to its first pastor and founder, the charismatic Rev. Clarence H. Cobbs. Greatly revered as a spiritual leader, it was under Rev.



First Church (shown in gray) is located on South Wabash Avenue in the Grand Boulevard community.

Cobbs' leadership that the church initiated a number of imaginative social outreach programs.

The Architecture of First Church

After its founding in 1929, the congregation worshipped in storefront locations on South State Street, before purchasing a one-story former hat factory in 1933 for conversion into a new worship space. Over the next four years, the congregation carried out numerous changes to this building at 4315 S. Wabash, most of which were confined to the interior.

The cornerstone of the First Church of Deliverance.

At that time, light industry and commercial enterprises lined the streets of the Grand Boulevard community, as manufacturers and businesses moved closer to their potential workers. Many African Americans had migrated from the South to Chicago after World War I in search of industrial jobs, and had moved into Grand Boulevard. It may well have been that some of the people who worshipped in First Church's remodelled hat factory previously worked in the building.

The hat factory, which was built in 1923, was a one-story brick structure, with a simple truss-roof. The openness of the factory's plan lent itself well to the needs of the church for a wide auditorium with clear views of the altar. The initial work apparently involved the removal of columns and partitions, and finishing the interiors for religious functions.

Much of the work was planned by engineer Charles Sumner Duke, a prominent African

The hat factory building, after it was converted in 1933 for use by First Church.

American who worked in the engineering departments of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and the City of Chicago's bridge division prior to establishing his own office in 1922.

First Church's adaptive reuse of a factory building for a large church went beyond the typical practices of African-American congregations. Most denominations of the early 20th century had purchased former churches and synagogues, including such landmark structures as Pilgrim Baptist Church (built in 1891; 3301 S. Indiana Ave.) and the Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church (built in 1899-1901; 2151 W. Washington Blvd.).

In 1939, the congregation obtained a building permit for the exterior alterations that largely reflect the appearance of the church today. A second story was added to the old factory building, adding height to the auditorium and space for offices and a radio broadcast booth above the entrance. Also, the building's 50-foot width was doubled, with construction to the south. The two different construction phases can be traced by differences in the window patterns of the side walls; the north dating from the construction of the original factory in 1923, and the south is from the 1939 addition.

In addition, the entire front facade was re-faced with bands of colored terra-cotta blocks, in a streamlined Art Moderne style. The shop drawings of the terra cotta supplier indicate that the most prominent features of the facade as seen today, the twin towers, were not part of this phase. The towers date from reconstruction work following a fire in 1945.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the 1939 expansion and new facade.

The 1939 Art Moderne design of the First Church of Deliverance was one of the last works of architect Walter Thomas Bailey (1884 -1941), the first African-American architect registered in Illinois. Born in Kewanee, Illinois, Bailey received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois in 1904 and became head of the architecture department at Tuskegee Institute under Booker T. Washington. In 1910, Bailey received an honorary masters of architecture degree from the University of Illinois. His commissions included a number of churches and public buildings in the South.

Walter T. Bailey, the first registered African-American architect in Illinois.

In Chicago, Bailey is best known for his design of the Pythian Temple at 3735-45 S. State St. (1925-30; demolished 1980), a massive complex built as the headquarters for the Knights of Pythias, one of the largest African-American benevolent societies in the United States. Bailey also was one of the architects of the Ida B. Wells Federal Housing Project and, at the time of his death in February 1941, he had just completed plans for the rebuilding of the interior of Olivet Baptist Church (southeast corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. and 31st St.) which had been damaged by a fire.

Bailey selected a streamlined Art Moderne style for First Church. This was the simpler style that had evolved from the richly ornamented Art Deco style of the 1920s. Art Moderne adopted the hard-edged linear qualities of the Deco style but had a distinct horizontal character and was minimal in its use of ornament. Facades were often in gleaming white with sharply defined color accents. The style also is distinguished by such forms as rounded corners, flat roofs, and smooth wall finishes with little, if any, surface embellishment. A clean, modern, streamlined character was the overall effect of the style.

The style gained broad acceptance with the American public during the Great Depression, as noted by architectural historian Marcus Whiffen (*American Architecture*, 1981): "It penetrated deep into the vernacular of American building and appeared in small towns everywhere, in the modest WPA post office as well as the roadside diners." The emphasis on simple, minimally adorned forms made the style easily adaptable to

a variety of architectural applications. Its ornamental moldings were relatively inexpensive and made from newer synthetic materials, making these stylized finishes readily accessible to an eager public.

Despite its popularity, examples of Art Moderne architecture are somewhat rare in Chicago. The Esquire Theater (58 E. Oak St.; 1938, now altered), Frank Fisher Apartments (1209 N. State Pkwy.; 1936); Kraft Building (500 N. Peshtigo Ct.; 1937); and Sears, Roebuck Store at Irving Park Rd. and Cicero Ave. (1938, partially altered) are notable buildings of the style in Chicago. More ubiquitous examples are scattered throughout the city in smaller-scale buildings, such as five-and-dime stores, gas stations, and restaurants.

Walter Bailey's design for First Church was a rare application of the Art Moderne style for an ecclesiastical structure. However, at the time of Bailey's design, First Church was actively promoting its gospel music and radio broadcast ministries, and the contemporary architecture was very much in keeping with the popular themes sounded by these new religious mediums.

First Church of Deliverance, shortly after the twin towers were added in 1946, following a fire. Shown in the inset photos are Rev. Cobbs and assistant pastor Rev. Mattie Thornton.

The rounded corners and smooth finishes of the building are distinctive features of the Art Moderne style.

The interior of First Church was damaged in a fire in December 1945, and a building permit listing the Kocher, Buss and DeKlerk Company as the architect, was taken out soon thereafter. In addition to reconstruction of the interior, the rear of the building was extended ten feet (to the east), and twin towers and a canopy were added to the building's front.

Building Description

The entire front elevation of the two-story building, which is rectangular in shape, is sheathed in buff-colored terra cotta. Bands of terra cotta, in graduating shades from dark to light green, accent the rounded curves of the towers and the front face. Thin ribbons of mauve and black terra cotta stripe the roofline.

The main facade is dominated by twin towers, which were added in 1946 and immediately nicknamed "Old Testament" and "New Testament" by the church's founder, Rev. Clarence Cobbs. The towers are set forward of the front elevation, flanking the entrance. Openings at the base of the towers, together with a low canopy spanning the towers, form an entry portico.

A notable feature of the original 1939 design, obscured by the addition of the canopy, is the

name of the church incised in the terra-cotta blocks over the entrance.

The use of terra cotta on First Church represented one of its last major installations in Chicago. As a relatively lightweight cladding material developed during the last quarter of the 19th century, terra cotta was an important aspect of Chicago's reputation for innovation in architecture. Although it was used on virtually every major commercial building in the city--from the construction of the Rookery in 1885 through the completion of the Wrigley Building in 1924, and beyond--the material fell out of favor because its labor-intensive manufacturing process made it more expensive than other cladding materials being developed in the 1920s. In an attempt to regain some of the building market, the terra cotta industry developed mechanized production methods, as well as new products.

Despite its popularity, examples of Art Moderne architecture are rare in Chicago.

The material for the First Church of Deliverence was provided by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company of Chicago, a firm that pioneered the development of the architectural terra cotta industry. During the 1930s, the company developed a line of extruded panels called "Art-i-sans," which was used on First Church. In contrast to the large and bulky terra-cotta blocks formerly produced, the new product had shallow backs and could be applied to plaster or brick surfaces. In addition, its brilliant, non-fading colors and reflective surfaces were compatible with the simplified lines of modern architecture, including the Art Moderne style. It was used on a variety of small-scale building types, but the most extensive installation in Chicago was for the walls of the State and Dearborn street subways in the 1940s.

With the exception of the windows on the towers, the building's windows were originally six-over-one, double-hung, wood sash. In the tower, the openings are filled with glass block, a building material that became available in the United States in the 1930s. Valued for its translucency and insulating qualities, glass block was ideal for a church where an atmosphere of privacy and tranquility were desirable. (In the late 1980s, all of the double-hung windows on the

front elevation were replaced with glass block.)

The interior of the building is rectangular in plan, consisting of three separate areas: a one-story entrance foyer; the two-story, column-free nave, or auditorium; and the raised main altar, area flanked by choir lofts with choir seating behind the altar. At the back of the church, above the entrance, the second floor is used for offices and the radio broadcast booth. Large openings in the wall provide a view of the auditorium.

The work on the church interior that was done in 1946, following the fire, included the introduction of two mural paintings by Chicago artist Fred Jones. Born in 1913 in Georgetown, South Carolina, Jones grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended Spelman College, studying with noted watercolorist Hale Woodruff. In the mid-1940s, Jones studied at the Art Institute of Chicago.

A Hyde Park resident, Jones' work is included in the collections of celebrities, art collectors, and major corporations. A 1987 *Chicago Tribune* article noted that Jones admired the work of

The large interior of First Church includes seating for 1,000, murals by artist Fred Jones, and a large, cross-shaped ceiling light.

Picasso and Chagall, and described Jones' style as a "slightly abstract, neo-romantic vision." His oils and watercolors are painted in rich warm tones and his subject matter, the urban African-American community, is depicted "full of life's simple truths played out in the vibrant reds, browns, and oranges of everyday life."

The colorful mural in the foyer of First Church was done in a style associated with the WPA murals of the Great Depression. It depicts the theme of "people coming to Christ," against a backdrop of the Chicago skyline. A second mural by Jones, which is located behind the altar, represents the church's relationship to God. (Both murals have been restored by the artist; in 1987 and 1992, respectively.)

A detail of the mural located behind the altar.

Jones also designed and carved the three sets of double doors of the main entrance. Made from a 100-year-old oak tree from Rev. Cobbs' summer house in Benton Harbor, Michigan, the doors were carved at the South Side Community Art Center (3831 S. Michigan Ave.), where Jones was a frequent exhibitor. Incised flat-relief figures depict angels keeping watch over a family arriving at First Church for worship services.

Other distinctive interior features include the low, cascading waterfall-shaped choirloft walls and the large, cross-shaped ceiling light. The curved forms of the choir walls and their stainless steel trim complement the building's Art Moderne exterior. The ceiling light, which is illuminated during services by colored lights, was installed in the 1950s--apparently based on an earlier version in which the outline of a cross was cut into the original plaster ceiling and bordered by cove lighting.

First Church began its radio broadcasts in 1934, and the design of the 1939 building was carried out with this function in mind. The low height of the auditorium and special acoustical plaster (now replaced with an acoustical tile, dropped ceiling) augmented these broadcasts. The original second-story broadcast booth is still in use today, with the colored lights signifying "Off the Air" (red), "Standby" (white) and "On the Air" (green) in evidence in the northwest corner of the auditorium.

Rev. Cobbs speaks at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the expansion of First Church in 1939.

Rev. Clarence H. Cobbs

The guiding force behind First Church was its founder and pastor for 50 years, the Rev. Clarence H. "Preacher" Cobbs (1908-1979). Through Rev. Cobbs' leadership, First Church carved out a unique position for itself in both the spiritual and secular communities of Chicago.

After being ordained in 1929, Cobbs started First Church of Deliverance, a congregation with humble beginnings. An ironing board was initially used for an altar, and followers sat on wooden boxes in the home of his mother, Luella Williams, at 3663 S. Indiana. Rev. Cobbs later moved the church into storefronts at 4155 and 4633 S. State, before purchasing--and later expanding--the former hat factory at 4315 S. Wabash in 1933.

First Church was a Spiritual denomination, apparently the first of its kind in Illinois. The Spiritual religion was a mainstay of Chicago's black religious culture during the Depression era, according to St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, whose authoritative work on African Americans in Chicago, *Black Metropolis* (1945), noted:

> The Spiritualist denomination seems to have been born in New Orleans and transplanted to [Chicago's] Bronzeville, where it flourished during the Depression. It borrows its hymns from the Baptists and Methodists, and appropriates altar, candles, and statues from the Catholics. It offers healing, advice, and "good luck" for the price of a prayer and the price of a candle or holy

> flower. It provides colorful robes for its preachers and "mediums," but despite its name rarely offers messages from the dead. Its "mediums" claim direct contact with the *sources* of wisdom. And, most important, the Spiritualist church in Bronzeville has no unkind words for card-playing, dancing, policy [gambling], ward politics, or the "sporting life."

Rev. Cobbs' ministry was consistent with the Spiritual religion's recognition of the dual, secular and religious, lives of its members. Cobbs gained notoriety for his outreach to social outcasts, such as prostitutes and gamblers . The pastor, however, saw his role as one of providing spiritual guidance to, as one member of his congregation said, "taking the Word of the Lord to the little people of this sinful world."

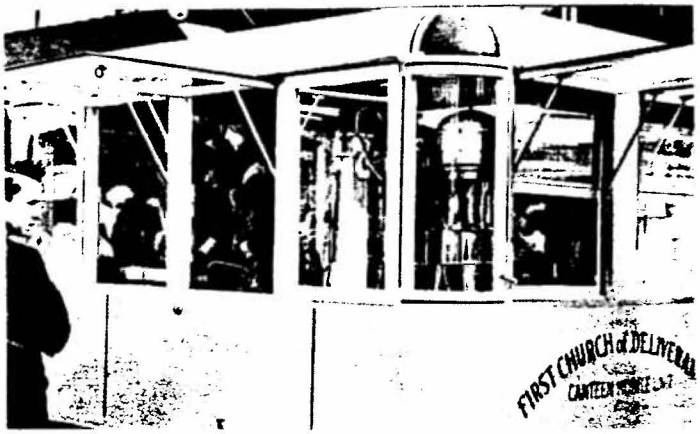
A spirit of warm social informality always characterized the sermons of Rev. Cobbs. He empathized with his congregation, and was never puritanical or righteous, as demonstrated by one his more famous, and shortest, sermons:

> There isn't going to be any sermon today. You all have been working too hard raising money for the convalescent home. I want you to do something nice for your own self for a change. Hear me. Go on out and have yourself a good time. The dishes you've been saving for company. Go home and eat off them your own self. Go on out and buy yourself some records. Buy yourself a bag of apples and oranges and every night before you go to sleep eat a piece of fruit and read something good from the Bible. Be nice to yourself. Amen.

Cobbs was known for his lifestyle and the material trappings with which he surrounded himself. His clerical wardrobe was extensive and included a $1,500 hand-stitched lace robe that his followers proudly claimed cost more than the one worn by then-Pope Pius XII. Cobbs' response to his critics was that if God had not wanted people to have expensive things, then God would not have created them.

From the time of its move to Wabash Avenue in 1933, during the Great Depression, Rev. Cobbs and First Church became very active in social outreach to the community. The church organized soup lines, distributed holiday food baskets, and, in later years, organized a blood bank for nearby Provident Hospital. In 1950, the church

Rev. Cobbs gained national attention for this outreach to social outcasts and to the community.



Among the church's social outreach programs was a mobile canteen for emergency and disaster victims.

established a mobile canteen to help emergency and disaster victims, firefighters, and police.

Today, First Church of Deliverance is part of an entire complex of buildings. To the north of the church is the Maggie Drummond Community Center (named after the grandmother of Rev. Cobbs), completed in the mid-1950s. Across the street, on the site of the old Capitol Dairy, is the Community Care convalescent home, opened in 1970. The Children's Church, next door to the church at 4317 S. Wabash Ave. was completed in 1978. (This building is connected to the main church by a passageway that is set back from the facade; consequently, it does not detract from the original design.) Most recently, in 1993, the church built Deliverance Manor (4201 S. Wabash Ave.), a senior citizens apartment building.

The stature of Rev. Cobbs was celebrated at the Church's 50th anniversary party in 1979, shortly before his death. Rev. Cobbs was acknowledged by telegrams from President Carter, Governor Thompson, and Mayor Byrne. In his speech, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the national president of Operation PUSH at the time, described Rev. Cobbs as his "spiritual father."

The Role of First Church in Gospel Music

From its earliest days on Wabash Avenue, First Church has used radio broadcasts and gospel music as a means of communicating its ministry

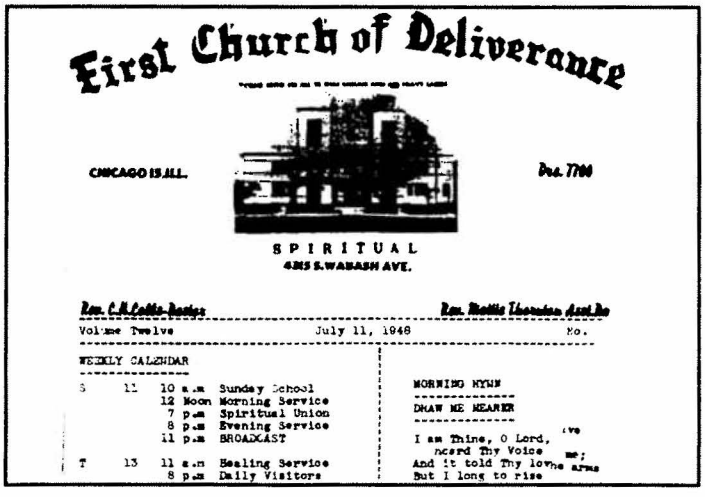
to broader audiences. In doing so, the church established a pioneering role for itself in the use of popular culture for its religious mission.

In 1934, the First Church of Deliverance began to broadcast its Sunday services on the radio, becoming one of the first African-American churches on the airwaves. Its services have been transmitted by some of Chicago's major radio stations, including WIND, WCFL, and WLUP.

(Ironically, former Mayor William Hale Thompson helped initiate one of the country's first radio ministries when he invited well-known revival speaker Paul Rader, founder of the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle, to preach at the June 17, 1921, broadcast debut of radio station WHT, which Thompson had founded on the roof of City Hall. The huge response to the broadcast encouraged Rader to establish a regular radio program.)

By proclaiming the word of God over the airwaves, First Church of Deliverance was on the cutting edge of a technological movement that revolutionized the propagation of the gospel. Rev. Cobbs was "the most popular Negro radio minister in the U.S.," said *Ebony* magazine (July 1949), noting that his weekly broadcasts were heard by more than one million listeners. "Generations of Chicagoans faithfully tuned into his Sunday night broadcast," said the *Chicago*

Largely through its radio broadcast, First Church became widely known as a center of gospel music, then in its infancy.



First Church of Deliverance

CHICAGO IS ILL. Phone 7700

SPIRITUAL

4845 S. WABASH AVE.

Rev. C. A. Cobbs, Pastor Rev. Hattie Thornton, Asst. Pastor

Volume Twelve July 11, 1948 No.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

S	11	10 a.m	Sunday School
		12 Noon	Morning Service
		7 p.m	Spiritual Union
		8 p.m	Evening Service
		11 p.m	BROADCAST
T	13	11 a.m	Healing Service
		8 p.m	Daily Visitors

MORNING HYMN

DRAW ME NEARER

I am Thine, O Lord, I've
heard Thy voice me;
And it told Thy love arms
But I long to rise

A church program from 1948.

***Ebony* magazine called Rev. Cobbs the most popular African-American radio minister in the U.S.**

Defender at the time of his death, "to hear the now stilled, resonant baritone state:"

> You in the taverns tonight; you on the dance floor; you in the poolrooms and policy [gambling] stations; you on your bed of affliction--Jesus loves you all, and Reverend Cobbs is thinking about you, and loves every one of you. It makes no difference what you think of me, but it does make a difference what I think of you.

Spiritual music had always been an integral part of the devotional practice of First Church, and largely through its radio broadcast the Church became widely known as a national center of gospel music. Rev. Cobbs became a strong and early advocate for this new form of musical worship, able to appreciate that music could convey both a spiritual message and entertainment.

Although it had deep roots in African-American culture, the art form known today as gospel music emerged only in the 1930s. Thomas Andrew Dorsey (1899-1993), the longtime music director at Pilgrim Baptist Church (3301 S. Indiana Ave.), is recognized as the founder of American gospel music, setting hymns and spirituals to a secular syncopated jazz/blues beat.

Although many traditional churchgoers initially referred to this as the "the devil's music" and considered it too upbeat to be religious, it soon gained widespread popularity. In fact, a number of mainstream African-American musicians, such as

Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, and Little Richard began their careers as gospel singers in other cities.

Two of the other famous individuals connected with First Church were Julia Mae Kennedy, an early music director, and organist Kenneth Morris. If Thomas Dorsey was considered the father of gospel music, then Morris, according to Beatrice Johnson Reagon, a national authority on gospel music, must be:

> **One of its most distinguished children...among the vanguard of musicians who began the evolutionary process that resulted in the major structural and organizational changes that occurred in gospel music during the 1930s and 1940s.**

Morris first met Rev. Cobbs in 1937 and, the following year, was appointed as the Church's gospel choir director. It was through Morris' association with Cobbs, according to Reagon, that Morris published his first songs. And it was with Morris, and the local and national entertainers who came to hear music at the church, that Rev. Cobbs became a national celebrity.

With the endorsement of, and funding from, Rev. Cobbs, Morris introduced the Hammond electric organ to gospel music, the use of which proved to be the most important innovation in gospel music up to the 1960s.

Additionally, First Church of Deliverance was the financial backer of one of the first gospel music publishing houses. The Martin and Morris Music Company was founded in 1940 by Kenneth Morris and Sallie Martin (1896-1988) who, through her pioneering work with Thomas Dorsey, is acclaimed as the "mother of gospel music." Reagon states that the company is "the oldest continuously operating gospel music publishing firm in the nation."

Other national celebrities have been associated with the church. Dinah Washington sang frequently there with the Sallie Martin Singers. Louis Armstrong also took part in musical events at the church. Church lore has it that jazz singer Billie Holliday, while entertaining in Chicago, always worshipped at First Church, even

The record label for one of Kenneth Morris' most famous gospel standards, "Dig a Little Deeper."

bringing her pet chihuahua along, much to the astonishment of the other worshippers.

In the 1950s, First Church of Deliverance recorded a gospel album with Nat King Cole; and in the 1960s, jazz pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines recorded an album with the choir. This tradition established by Rev. Cobbs has been maintained under the leadership of current pastor Rev. Eugene Gray and assistant pastor Harold Porter. In 1993, Delois Barrett Campbell and the Barrett Singers performed at the church for its 64th anniversary celebration.

Several generations of the same family have attended services at First Church, shown here in a recent Sunday view looking north on Wabash Avenue.

APPENDICES

Criteria for Designation

Designation of the First Church of Deliverance as a Chicago Landmark is recommended because the building meets four of the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-210-620 of the Chicago Municipal Code.

CRITERION 1

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

First Church of Deliverance is especially valuable in the cultural heritage of the United States and, in particular, that of the African-American community. The church has been instrumental in the development and promulgation of gospel music, a part of the national music culture valued not only for its influence on religious worship but also as a form of popular music entertainment.

Additionally, First Church of Deliverance has featured prominently in the history of Christian broadcasting in Chicago. It was one of the first African-American churches to conduct a radio program, one which is still in existence today. Having broadcast its services since 1934, First Church was a pioneer in using the radio broadcast medium to further its religious mission.

Since the days of the Depression, First Church of Deliverance has ministered not only to the spiritual welfare of the Grand Boulevard neighborhood but also to the varied aspects of its temporal welfare as well. Today, its social service program includes a community center, children's church, senior citizen housing, and a convalescent center.

CRITERION 3

Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

The founder and pastor of First Church of Deliverance, Rev. Clarence Cobbs, was one of the most popular and inspirational ministers of his day. The words and deeds of his life continue to resonate in the African-American community today. Cobbs founded First Church of Deliverance in 1929 and, within a decade, transformed it from a storefront church into one of the leading Spritualist

congregations in the nation. In the process, Cobbs himself became a nationally recognized African-American religious leader.

Most significantly, he was the most widely followed radio preacher in Chicago and across the United States. In 1949, *Ebony* magazine recognized Cobbs as the most popular African-American radio evangelist due to his Sunday night broadcasts from First Church.

The church is also important for its association with composer-choral arranger-music publisher Kenneth Morris, one of the most influential figures in gospel music. Among his accomplishments at First Church was the introduction of the electric Hammond organ into the music program, an innovation that dramatically changed gospel accompaniment. With financial support from First Church, and along with Sallie Martin, "the mother of gospel music," Morris founded the Martin and Morris Music Company, an important early publisher of gospel music.

CRITERION 4

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

Notable is the First Church's adaptive reuse of a factory building for its church. In First Church's transformation of a former hat factory, beginning in 1933, the church departed from a common practice of African-American congregations, which was to adapt former churches and synagogues for new denominations.

First Church of Deliverance is one of the premier examples of Art Moderne architecture in Chicago. Further, the 1939 design, supplemented with the addition of two towers in 1946, is a rare application of the Moderne style for an ecclesiastical structure. The curved corners, flat roof, smooth terra-cotta wall finishes, and glass block windows, all seen on First Church, create the distinctive streamlined look characteristic of the Art Moderne style.

The architecture of First Church is significant also as one of the last major installations of terra cotta as a cladding material. Terra cotta was an important aspect of Chicago's reputation for innovation in architecture, being used on virtually every major commercial building in the city from the 1880s through the 1920s. The material for the First Church of Deliverance, which was provided by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company of Chicago, was a special line of extruded panels called "Art-i-sans."

CRITERION 5

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

Much of the appearance of First Church of Deliverance dates from work done in 1939 from designs by Walter T. Bailey (1884-1941), the first African-American architect registered in Illinois. Among his important Chicago commissions are the

Pythian Temple at 3735-45 S. State St. (1935-30; demolished 1980) and work on the Ida B. Wells Federal Housing Project, completed in 1941.

Two other prominent African Americans are associated with this church. Much of the initial adaptive reuse of the original factory into First Church of Deliverance was planned by prominent African-American structural engineer Charles Sumner Duke. The work of well-known African-American artist Fred Jones was introduced at First Church of Deliverance in 1946 with two large interior mural paintings and three sets of incised oak doors for the main entrance. A longtime Chicagoan, Jones's work is included in the collections of celebrities, art collectors, and major corporations.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Based on its evaluation of the First Church of Deliverance, the staff recommends that the following be identified as significant historical and architectural features:

- all exterior aspects of the building (not including the Children's Church, 4317 S. Wabash Ave.); and
- two interior murals, in the entry foyer and behind the main altar.

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Acknowledgments

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Ebony magazine (Oct. 1960)
(p. 14)
The Souvenir of Negro Progress (1925)
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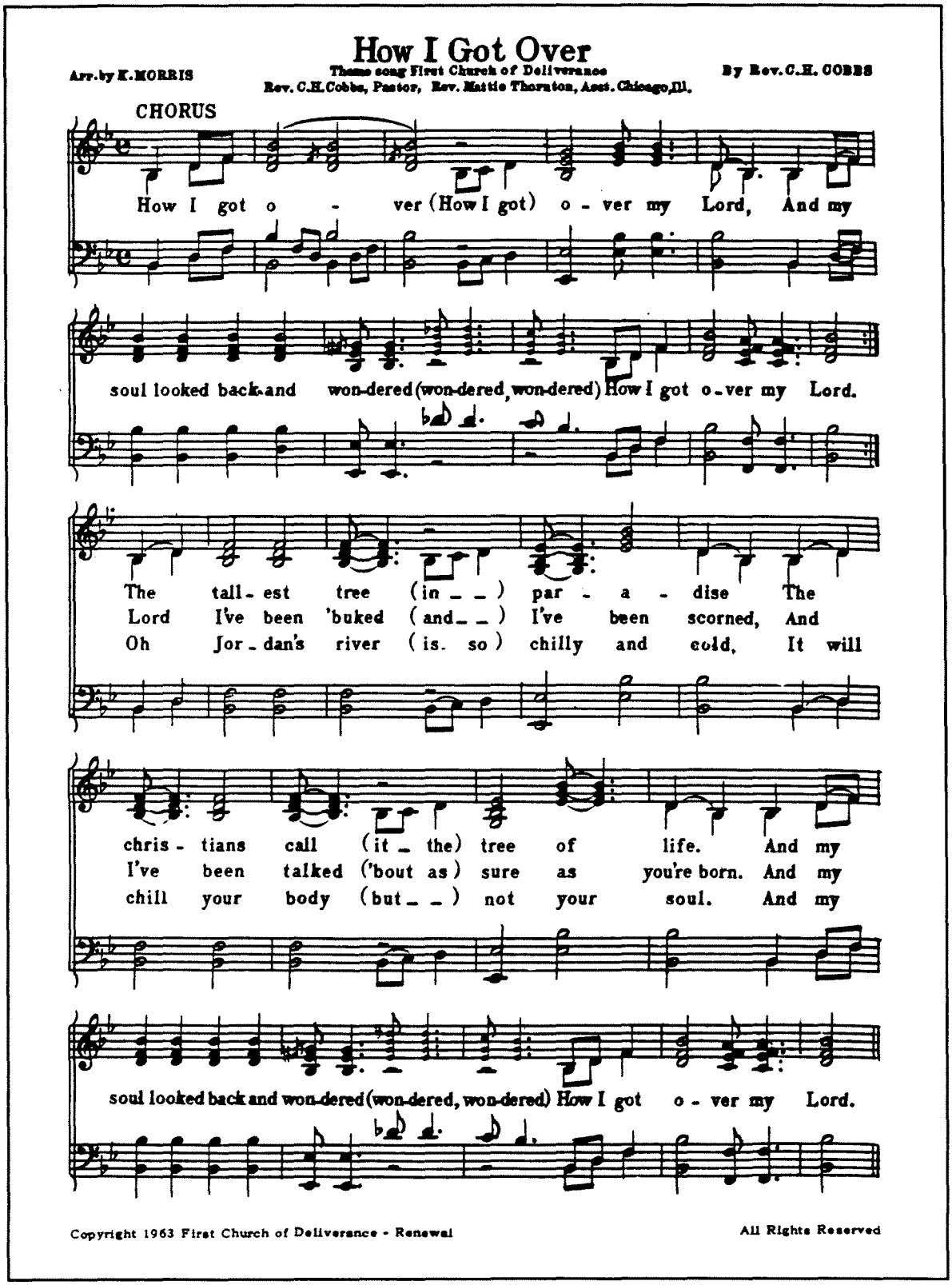
How I Got Over
Arr. by K. MORRIS
Theme song First Church of Deliverance
Rev. C.H. Cobbs, Pastor, Rev. Mattie Thornton, Asst. Chicago, Ill.
By Rev. C.H. COBBS
CHORUS
How I got o - ver (How I got) o - ver my Lord, And my
soul looked back and won-dered (won-dered, won-dered) How I got o-ver my Lord.
The tall-est tree (in _ _) par - a - dise The
Lord I've been 'buked (and _ _) I've been scorned, And
Oh Jor-dan's river (is. so) chilly and cold, It will
chris - tians call (it _ the) tree of life. And my
I've been talked ('bout as) sure as you're born. And my
chill your body (but _ _) not your soul. And my
soul looked back and won-dered (won-dered, won-dered) How I got o - ver my Lord.
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The theme song of First Church of Deliverance, which was arranged by the church's gospel choir director and organist, Kenneth Morris.

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